from: https://plantselect.org/crevice-garden-demonstration/

New Crevice Garden Display Opens in Fort Collins, Colo.

September 24th, 2024

Thanks to the efforts of many people and organizations!

A utilitarian bike rack. Compacted soil. And an island of mulch… For years, that's what existed outside the front doors of the Colorado State University (CSU) Horticulture Center in Fort Collins, Colo. But **Ross Shrigley** of Plant Select had a vision for something more. He imagined a crevice garden demonstration area that could serve as a teaching tool for both students and the community.

Today, through the help and generosity of many people and organizations, the CSU Horticulture Center has its new crevice garden display. The lonely island of mulch has been transformed into a showcase for how to build low-water, western-inspired gardens that support a diverse range of plants, insects, birds and wildlife.

Before

After

A showcase of different materials and plants

Within the demonstration area, there are different crevice garden styles and materials, including stained concrete, granite rip rap, flagstone, red rip rap, and veneer (1.5” thick).

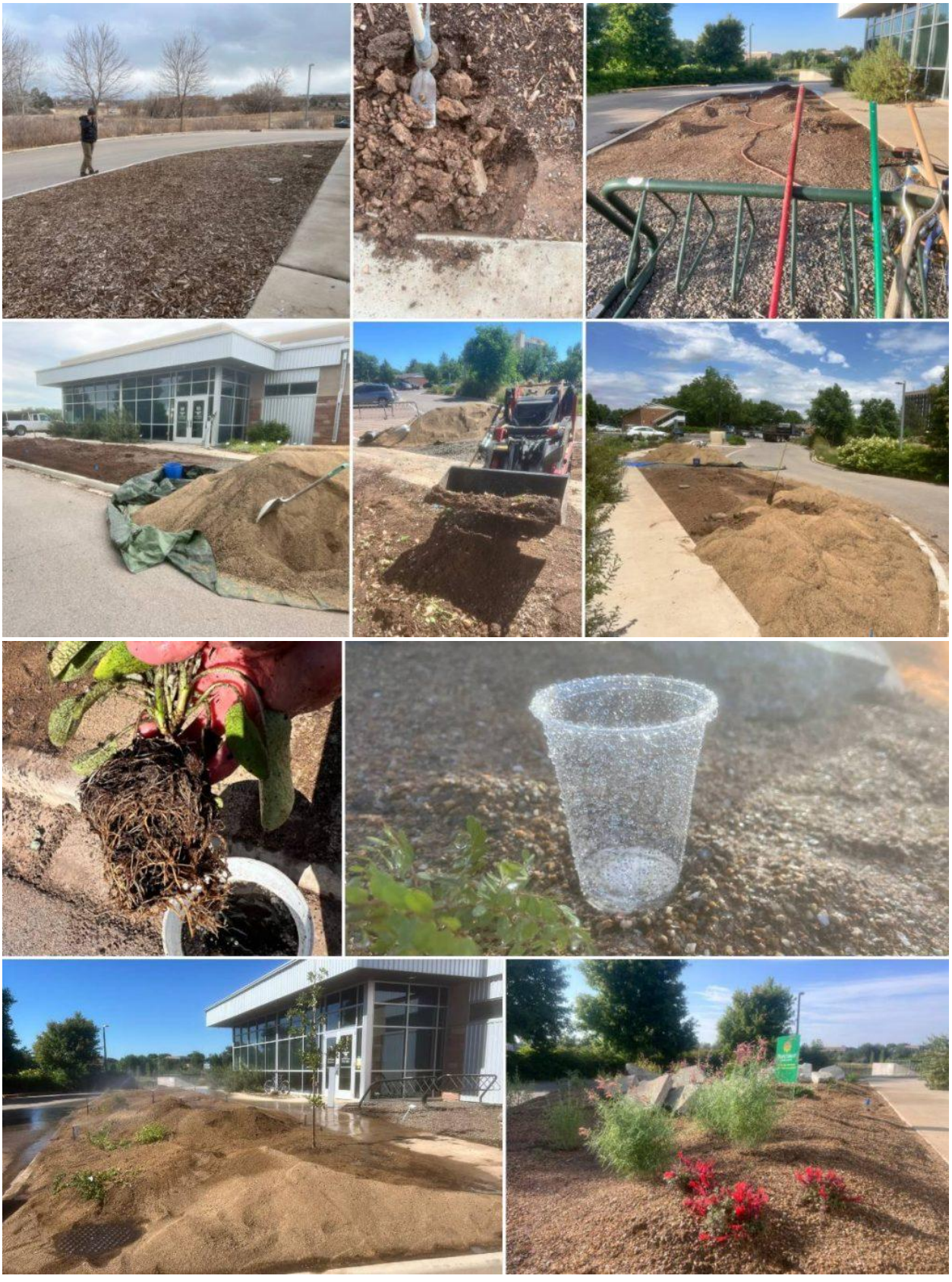
The concrete was “rescued” from a construction project on the CSU campus just a few blocks away. Ross stained the concrete a camel color and reused it to show how discarded debris can be repurposed in a beautiful way. See the top left photo in the collage below.

The new crevice gardens also contain a combination of native and well-adapted plants—from oak trees and sandcherry shrubs being tested in the Plant Select trial program, to water-wise perennials, to unusual rock garden plants. All the plants in the garden have been bare-root planted, meaning the soil was removed from the plants’ roots before planting. It’s believed this can help the plant roots grow deep and adapt faster to their new soil.

“It’s an informal experiment,” Ross says, “to see what kinds of plants you can bare root and how fast they get established.”

How the Plant Select demonstration area came together

Ross and CSU horticulture students began prepping the area in the spring of 2024. They brought in materials, prepared the soil, installed an irrigation system, and bare-root planted some foundational perennials and trees.



But the most exciting transformation to the area occurred in mid-September 2024.

Horticulturist **Kenton Seth**—co-author of *The Crevice Garden* and a national expert on crevice gardens—teamed up with Plant Select to lead a one-day masterclass on crevice garden creation and installation. Kenton is based in western Colorado, but he's traveled the world to build more than 50 crevice gardens. He has a passion for crevice gardens, meadows and xeric native gardens… and how these landscapes overlap.

During the masterclass, Kenton taught local professionals—including landscape architects, designers, installers and municipality teams—how to bring a crevice garden to life. The participants discovered important design and installation considerations for different types of crevice garden materials and how to bare-root plant a variety of rock garden perennials, as well as shrubs and trees.

It was a hands-on day!

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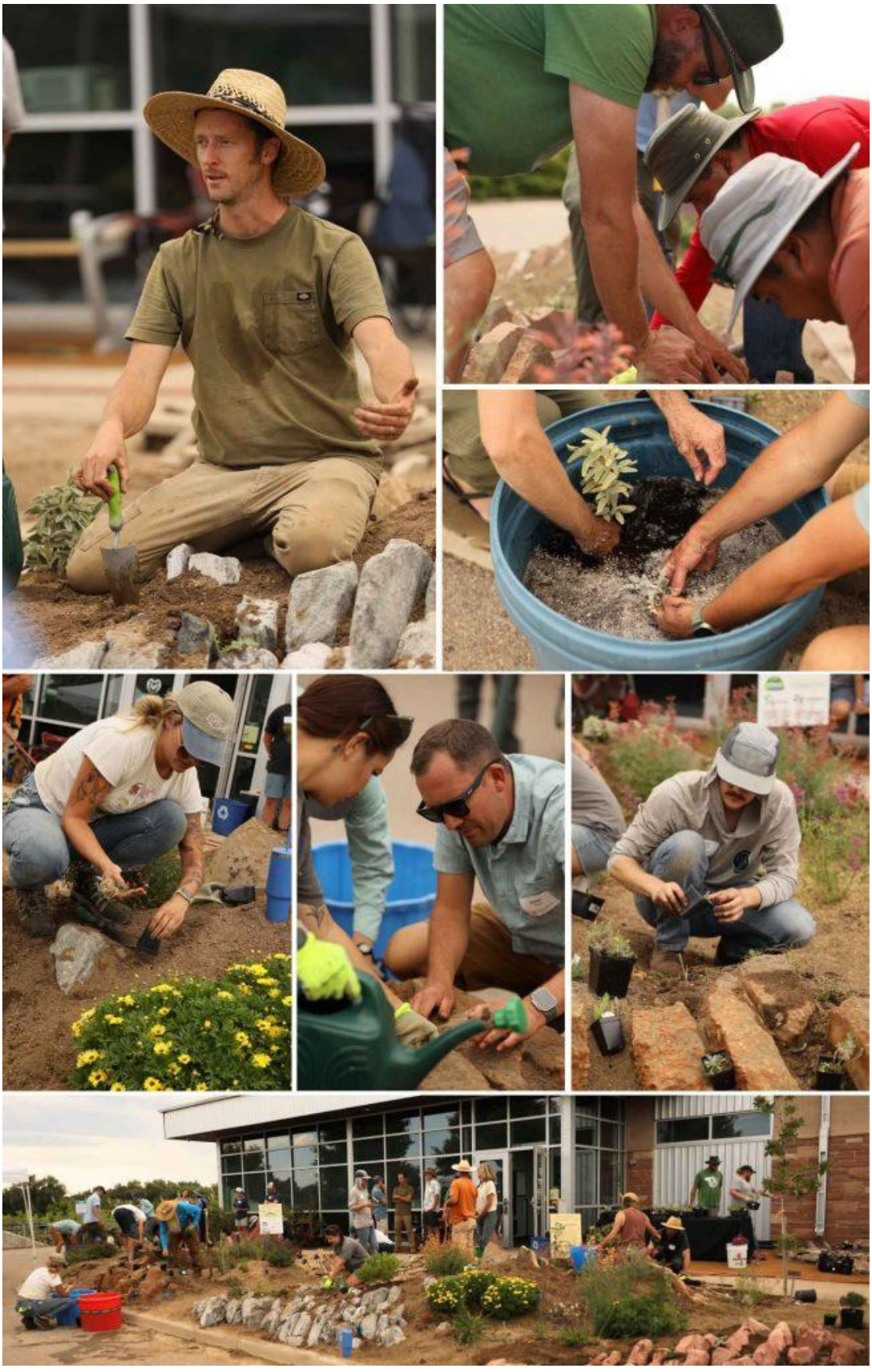

The transformation continues

Next up? Ross says more plants will be added, and there's signage in the works, so visitors can easily interpret the crevice garden plants and materials.

In the meantime, Ross has already observed hummingbirds, hawks, toads from Spring Creek, and a wide range of pollinators visiting the new garden. It's teaming with life, and this is just the beginning.

Ross hopes the demonstration garden will inspire others to lean into this style of gardening because it fits so well in the West. Crevice gardens can be used for a variety of purposes, from retaining walls, to window wells, to beautiful landscape features.

"People are going to be shocked at how little water these crevice gardens end up using and the beauty of each one," Ross shares. "I hope this area will inspire people to install crevice gardens at their homes, in their HOAs or in places with really challenging conditions. This type of garden solves so many landscape problems and builds natural habitat right into our gardens."